

# Depository Library Council

*Advisory body to the Director of the U.S. Government Publishing Office*

May 17, 2023

Hugh Nathaniel Halpern, Director  
U.S. Government Publishing Office  
732 North Capitol Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20401

Dear Director Halpern,

On behalf of the Depository Library Council (DLC) I am pleased to present two commendations and two recommendations approved by the DLC during our Spring 2023 meeting, held on May 1-2. The commendations are tied to 2022-2023 events significant to the Federal Depository Library Program—the release of the report of the [Task Force on the Feasibility of a Digital FDLP](#) and the celebration of 50 years of DLC meetings. The two recommendations are from [Exploring the Durability of PURLs and Their Alternatives Working Group](#).

## Commendations

1. The 2022-2023 Depository Library Council (DLC) commends the members of the Task Force on a Digital Federal Depository Library Program for their work on the [Feasibility of a Digital Federal Depository Library Program: Report of the GPO Director's Task Force](#). This report, and its recommendations, represent a year of accelerated collaboration, research, outreach, and analysis by a cross-section of professionals committed to providing U.S. Government information to the American public.

DLC recognizes the time, effort, and thoughtfulness that went into the creation of this report. DLC acknowledges that this report and the acceptance of its recommendations by the Director of GPO represents an important inflection point for the Federal Depository Library Program and the thousands of libraries, agencies, and individuals it is meant to serve. Council is proud of our fellow DLC members, GPO staff, and the other members of the Task Force, impressed by the tremendous effort that went into delivering this product to GPO within the assertive timeline established by Director Halpern, and happy that so many of the questions and concerns raised by the broader community of government information professionals

were addressed. Council wishes to express appreciation to all those who contributed to this report as Task Force members or as community participants in the process.

2. The 2022-2023 Depository Library Council (DLC) celebrated its 50th anniversary of meetings at its [2023 virtual spring meeting](#). Since 1972, almost 250 individuals have served on the DLC. A list of all past members is available on the [Federal Depository Library Program \(FDLP\) website](#). As evidenced in the program [To "Serve a Useful and Salutary Purpose": A Look at 50 Years of the Depository Library Council](#), members of council have advised GPO on necessary improvements, discussed new innovations, and helped cultivate a community across the FDLP. Without the voluntary service of these hundreds of individuals, the community of government information professionals and the FDLP would not be as strong today. Council thanks all past members of the DLC for their service and commends them for helping shape the FDLP. We look forward to a bright future continuing to represent the Depository Community.

## Recommendations

1. The Exploring the Durability of PURLs and Their Alternatives Working Group of the Depository Library Council recommended the Council endorse the attached Principles for Persistent Identifiers (PIDs) and PID systems, and further recommended they be transmitted to the Director of GPO with a recommendation that they be adopted. Council approved this request and endorsed the principles on May 2, 2023.

### Justification:

Principles provide a foundation and set parameters for achieving a particular goal. The Working Group set out to identify the basic foundations that support and guide efforts to find the best available solution for persistent access to Federal Government information. Incorporating GPO's vision of America Informed through free permanent public access to the U.S. Government's information, the Working Group created the recommended principles for PIDs and PID systems for GPO.

2. The Exploring the Durability of PURLs and Their Alternatives Working Group proposes that the Depository Library Council recommend to GPO that training be offered on PURLs that includes, but is not limited to, referral reports, how to create a library's report profile, how the data can be used to promote Government resources, and features in GPO

bibliographic records that relate to PURLs. Council approved this request on May 2, 2023.

Justification:

It is evident from the discussion during the focus groups that there is an interest in and need for more education and training for depository staff. Some participants clearly stated wanting to learn more about usage statistics and PURL reports, and others were unaware of the availability of these tools. The lack of participants' familiarity suggests that additional community members would also benefit from greater education as well. Conversations in focus group sessions indicated that training regarding features in GPO bibliographic records would be useful for providing library staff with more tools to work around "broken" PURLs.

As my term on the Depository Library Council is coming to an end, should you have any questions, please direct them to the 2023-2024 DLC Chair Jen Kirk <[jen.kirk@usu.edu](mailto:jen.kirk@usu.edu)>. Thank you for your support of the Federal Depository Library Program, the Depository Library Council, and all those we serve.

Sincerely,

Lisa Pritchard, 2022-2023 Depository Library Council Chair

*Lisa Pritchard*

Attachment: Recommended Principles for Persistent Identifiers and Persistent Identifier Systems for the Government Publishing Office

Copy: Scott Matheson, Superintendent of Documents  
Jen Kirk, 2023-2024 Depository Library Council Chair

## Recommended Principles for Persistent Identifiers and Persistent Identifier Systems for the Government Publishing Office

The Depository Library Council convened the Exploring the Durability of PURLs and Their Alternatives Working Group to examine the benefits and drawbacks of the persistent URL system currently used by the Government Publishing Office (GPO), and to explore the current landscape for persistent identifiers (PIDs) more broadly. The Working Group identified a need for principles to guide the determination of the best available solution for persistent access to Federal Government information in the current digital landscape. The Working Group subsequently created the following recommended principles for PIDs and PID systems for GPO. The Working Group incorporated GPO's vision of *America Informed* through free permanent public access to the U.S. Government's information into the development of these principles, and sought to consider the current state of Federal information technology infrastructure and cybersecurity.

### PERSISTENT IDENTIFIER PRINCIPLES

#### **PIDs must be unique and provide direct long-term access to a specific digital document or object that is openly accessible.**

Each PID is associated with a unique and unduplicated URL that provides direct access. There is a one-to-one correlation between the PID and the digital object it identifies. PIDs should only be assigned to resources that will be preserved for the long term, which is to be understood over several hardware and software generations. GPO should employ PIDs only for digital objects that are openly accessible and can be viewed and downloaded without passing through a paywall.

#### **PIDs must be unchanging and never reused.**

The PID for the content must remain the same and should persist over time as long as the resource is publicly accessible. PIDs must never be reused for a different document or object.

#### **PIDs must enable access to a digital resource under the control of a trusted entity or an established partner.**

A core component of permanence and reliable performance is control of the digital content. GPO should employ PIDs only for digital objects that are under its control or under the control of an official partner, with a signed agreement requiring the transfer of content if the official partner is unable to maintain it in its current system.

**PIDs must enable access to the specific object described in the metadata for the resource.**

PIDs must resolve to the version of the resource indicated in the descriptive metadata that is validated or approved by GPO or an official partner. Resources must be disambiguated within the system so they are distinct and distinguishable from other resources. PIDs must be usable for different types of digital content and scalable for increasing amounts of content.

## **PERSISTENT IDENTIFIER SYSTEM PRINCIPLES**

**PIDs must be part of a system that is stable, secure, and interoperable with other systems.**

The PID system(s) must provide reliable and stable access, with appropriate redundancy against outages and security issues. The system must connect and exchange information with tools, systems, and technologies used by GPO and others. PIDs must be able to be migrated with future system updates.

**The PID system must resolve the identifier to the kernel metadata.**

A review of the kernel metadata will enable validation that the PID resolves to the intended digital object.

**PIDs should work regardless of the users' access starting point and the access system or delivery service used.**

URLs that resolve through the PID system(s) should work reliably from any point of origin, allowing local systems to pass traffic through additional controls (such as a proxy server) as needed.

**PIDs must have publicly accessible metadata.**

PIDs must have metadata that is separate from the object metadata. PID metadata should be publicly accessible, retrievable, and interoperable with global registries.